

***Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine
The Year in Review – Fiscal Year 2006***

Introduction

Fort McHenry had an **extraordinary** year of events and activities in Fiscal Year 2006. On behalf of the National Park Service, and the park staff, we want to share these. With a park base funding of \$1,766,000, the park continues to successfully manage an ever-growing visitation of over 619,000 with a staff of 22 full time employees and 19 seasonal employees. Within the 43 acres of cultural landscape, there are 36 historic structures, over 54,000 artifacts in the museum collection, 4 archeological sites, and over 59,000 recorded bird sightings representing 57% of species found in the State of Maryland.

A New Visitor/Admin Facility for Fort McHenry:

In November 2005, Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine presented the project concept and received approval from the Development Advisory Board (DAB) to proceed with design for a new Visitor Center/Administration Building at the park! At long last the park received the first allocations (covering FY2005 and FY2006) from the federal SAFETEA-LU program under the 2005 Federal Transportation Reauthorization Bill. Federal funding was transferred through a complex series of agreements with other state and federal agencies. A televised Press Conference was held on January 27, 2006 and Senator Paul Sarbanes and Congressman Ben Cardin announced the launching of this project. Consequently, the park was able to award a contract for conceptual design to the architectural firm of Grieves, Worrall, Wright and O'Hatnick (GWWO) of Baltimore. GWWO has tremendous experience designing education and visitor facilities, having most recently completed the new orientation facility and education buildings at Mount Vernon. An international firm, Haley Sharpe, was subsequently chosen as the sub-contractor for exhibit design.

Administration:

Budget:

The park operating base for fiscal year 2006 was \$1, 766,000. This was supplemented with fees collected for admission to the park, grants for projects from the National Park Service, and concessions and park pass fees.

Fee Collection:

Entrance fees totaled \$360,000 which included 67,070 adults paying a single visit admission fee. 233 National Park Passes and 1250 Golden Age Passports were sold. 28 Special Use Permits generated \$19,000 in additional revenue from cost recovery and land use.

Personnel:

Currently the park employees 22 full time permanent employees and 19 seasonal workers. Many employees participated in professional development opportunities in FY2006, totaling 496 training hours.

Concessions:

The park completed all paperwork and contract review necessary to advertise a 3-year concessions contract for the park store; we are awaiting regional staff work for that to happen.

Maintenance and Facility Management:

The Maintenance Division has continued to move forward with improving the condition of park assets at both Fort McHenry and Hampton. Comprehensive Condition Assessments were completed on the Fort's eight most significant assets (and eight of Hampton's most significant assets). Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems were upgraded in five structures. Motion detector switches for interior lighting and setback thermostats received as a donation were installed at the two parks. Eighteen compliance actions were prepared for preservation maintenance projects and construction activities at the two parks.

Facility Management Software System (FMSS) data continued to indicate improving trends in park preservation. Extensive work was performed on the park database to meet the program requirements for Washington. Horticulturist Paul Bitzel assisted other parks, the Region, and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in software training and use.

In the past year, to preserve park resources, the park replaced 6 boilers in the barracks in the historic Star Fort and the HVAC in the museum collection storage facility. It is noteworthy that this project should demonstrate a 15-20% energy reduction. The park has awarded a contract to EBL Engineering and is now installing a fire suppression system in the museum collection storage facility and in one of the barracks in the Star Fort.

The Cultural Landscapes at Hampton and Fort McHenry saw many improvements through completion of three-year tree preservation and hazard removal contracts. All trees and significant specimens received treatment. Donations were received from the Maryland State Department of Natural Resources Tree-Mendous Maryland Program, garden clubs and individuals that enabled the parks to replace missing historic specimens.

Interpretation and Education:

FOMC added approximately 350 Ranger-led programs during the summer of 2006. Overall, 2,790 formal interpretive programs were delivered. In addition, the park conducted 255 interpretive demonstrations and 330 educational programs.

Fort McHenry received a Civic Engagement grant for \$10,000 in partnership with the Friends of Fort McHenry. School visits for inner-city youth were implemented on May 8,

9, & 10 2006. Three targeted schools received a day-long curriculum-based educational program involving tours of the fort, flag talks, a boat trip down the Patapsco River and talks on the Water Battery exhibit.

The park, in partnership with the City of Baltimore, hosted “Young Defenders” – a special educational initiative with Baltimore City schools – in September. Over 900 inner-city students visited the park for a day-long program involving living history activities, tours of the fort and interpretive demonstrations marking the anniversary of the Battle of Baltimore and writing of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” It was an incredible successful and will hopefully become an annual event.

The number of special events was unprecedented in 2006. Park staff and volunteers participated in over 50 special events on and off-site. Highlights of the larger events are below:

Yuletide, December – This was a first-time event for Fort McHenry. The program focused on how soldiers from various eras of the fort’s history observed the Yuletide season. Over 350 visitors came out for this evening program. Staffing was made up of Seasonal Park Rangers and volunteers.

A large Civil War weekend was held in late April. Approximately 100 Civil War reenactors were on-site to interpret to 2,000 visitors over the weekend. This underscored an important secondary theme of the park.

Living American Flag, May 23 – Park staff worked with the American Flag Foundation to host the annual living American Flag. Each year thousands of students stand in grid with a red, white or blue placard to form a giant living American Flag. Ranger Susan Knauer led a special effort to locate more schools (especially home schools) and this year’s total number of 4,300 was approximately 1,200 more than last year.

Flag Day, June 14 – Annual commemoration of the adoption of the Stars and Stripes as the National Symbol. This event, in partnership with the American Flag Foundation, is always a great success.

Juneteenth – The first time the event was co-hosted with the National Juneteenth Museum. This was part of a park initiative to attract a more diverse audience and share a more inclusive story. Event focused on the role of African-Americans in the War of 1812, defense of Baltimore and role in American history. Broader themes related to the flag as a symbol of freedom to all Americans. The event was covered by two television stations and three newspapers.

The *USS Fort McHenry*, a 609 foot naval warship made it first port of call visit to Baltimore on June 30th. The ship planned a series of July 4th programs involving the ship and the crew. The ship was greeted with cannon firing from the fort, the raising of the 30 x 42 foot Star-Spangled Banner and an official welcome by the Mayor of Baltimore.

Over 300 visitors were in attendance and the event was covered by 3 major newspapers and 5 major television networks.

Fort McHenry hosted three military “Tattoo” ceremonies this summer. Each evening ceremony offered a blend of military pageantry and history. Featured service branches were: U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps. Approximately 3,500 visitors attended the tattoos. Mary Bomar, NE Regional Director received the honor of being named “Honorary Colonel of the Fort McHenry Guard” at the Navy tattoo.

Star-Spangled Banner Weekend/Defenders’ Day, September 8,9,10 – The program marks the annual anniversary of the Battle of Baltimore and writing of The Star-Spangled Banner. Approximately 16,000 visitors came to the park over a three-day weekend. The program featured parades through Baltimore City, symbolic ship-to-shore “bombardment,” 100 War of 1812 reenactors, concert by the U.S. Army Field Band and Soldiers’ Chorus and firework show. The event was covered by 5 major television stations and 10 newspapers.

Under a Special Use Permit the park offered a 2-day interpretive program and historical orientation to the incoming class of over 1600 plebes from the U.S. Naval Academy.

Special Use permits;

Twenty-eight permits were issued for military re-enlistments and change of command ceremonies. Eight permits were issued for charity walks or runs including the 1- mile leg for the Baltimore City Marathon with over 3,000 participants. This event was followed by the cycle race known as the ‘Tour Du Port’ for over 1000 participants. Ten filming permits were issued including the promotion for the Miss USA Contest, public service announcements, tourism commercials, and patriotic videos.

Resources Stewardship:

The park manages the entire 43 acre urban site as a cultural landscape that contains 57 historic structures and other assets, over 54,000 museum artifacts, 4 archeological sites. During FY 2006, in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the park reviewed 8 undertakings that all were determined to be “no adverse effects” on the park resources. These projects were entered in PEPC (Planning, Environment and Public Comment) software system. The park continues to consult regularly with the Maryland State Historic Preservation office and helped the SHPO’s staff fire a cannon from the Water Battery at their annual consultation meeting.

With assistance from the Northeast Region’s Museum Collection and Protection Program, the park has awarded a contract for \$80,000 to install a fire suppression system in the Civil War Powder Magazine. This structure was adaptively reused to house over 55,000 artifacts from both Fort McHenry and Hampton. When this project is completed,

the same contractor will be installing a fire suppression system in one of the barracks in the historic Star Fort.

The park was able to use 80% Recreational Fee money to purchase two circa 1810 French naval cannons for the collection. These guns are made of iron, weigh approximately 12,000 pounds and are over ten feet long. Using period specifications, authentic reproduction naval cannon carriages were fabricated to mount the guns for display.

The Memorial Grove at Orpheus was replanted following completion of the Cultural Landscape Report. Thirty-five 10-12' crabapple trees were planted using a disease-resistant variety evoking the original planting dedicated to patriots of the 1814 Battle of Baltimore. The park also restored a flowery cherry grove planted in 1932 by Baltimore City school children as part of a local commemoration of the 200th birthday of George Washington. Thirty-six 10-12' 'Yoshino' cherries, the original variety, were used. The trees were officially rededicated in a public ceremony held on April 28, 2006, National Arbor Day.

The park has continued its partnership with the National Aquarium in Baltimore and the Maryland Port Authority in maintenance of the tidal wetlands adjacent to Fort McHenry. Construction began on two footbridges that will provide access to areas of the wetlands for educational programs, maintenance, hydrological research and inventorying and monitoring of plant and animal species. The National Aquarium brought more than 1000 Baltimore school children through the wetlands to participate in a variety of environmental programs.

The parks' Meadow Management Plan has been expanded to include the Historic Orchard at Hampton and Whetstone Point at Fort McHenry. Bi-annual mowing will encourage flora and fauna diversity, reduce maintenance costs and enhance the cultural landscapes.

Resource protection and Law enforcement:

Throughout the year the ranger division provided law enforcement, medical and special event support to both parks. The staff was able to conduct operations and training without having an on-site Senior Law Enforcement Officer; Brion Fitzgerald of Gettysburg served that function officially and consulted with staff as needed.

In October of 2005, Brian Richardson attended the new Land Management Police Training program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco GA, where he earned honors and graduated first in his class. He was sent to field training at New River Gorge National River in WV for the majority of the summer of 2006. Fort McHenry was thrilled to welcome him back in September.

Security clearances were updated for the Superintendent and all LE Rangers. Staff also responded to multiple medical cases, as needed; Fort McHenry has three EMTs on staff and one EMT trainee.

Volunteer Program:

The volunteer program at Fort McHenry continued to expand during 2006. Volunteers were active in all aspects of park operations. Recruiting efforts added 40 VIPs in various divisions this year. Some of these recruits came from longstanding park partners such as the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Baltimore Bird Club and various living history units. Overall, over 510 volunteers contributed 29,192 hours in FY 2006 – a record year!

One particular highlight was the Fort McHenry Guard, our volunteer living history unit, presenting the colors and opening the 2006 Northeast Superintendents Conference in Washington, DC.

Partnerships:

The park continues to successfully manage the site with the help of numerous and diverse types of partnerships. The primary list of partners include the Living Classrooms Foundation – Friends of Fort McHenry, United State Coast Guard, City of Baltimore (Mayor's Office, Heritage Area Program and Office of Promotion), the State of Maryland Office of Tourism and Economic Development, the National Aquarium in Baltimore, the National Historic Seaport of Baltimore, the Society and Daughters of the War of 1812, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network Program, and the Greater Baltimore History Alliance. Staff also participated in efforts to review and finalize a Feasibility Study for the designation of Baltimore City as a National Heritage Area.

FY2006 was a phenomenal year for FOMC!!! FY2007 can only get even better.